The Commonweal

March 28, 1952

Hiss and Pound: Symbols

by Peter Viereck

The Lost Liberals

by Doris Grumbach

HENRY RAGO • VICTOR WHITE • ALAN DEVOE

BRADFORD COOK • FRANCIS DOWNING

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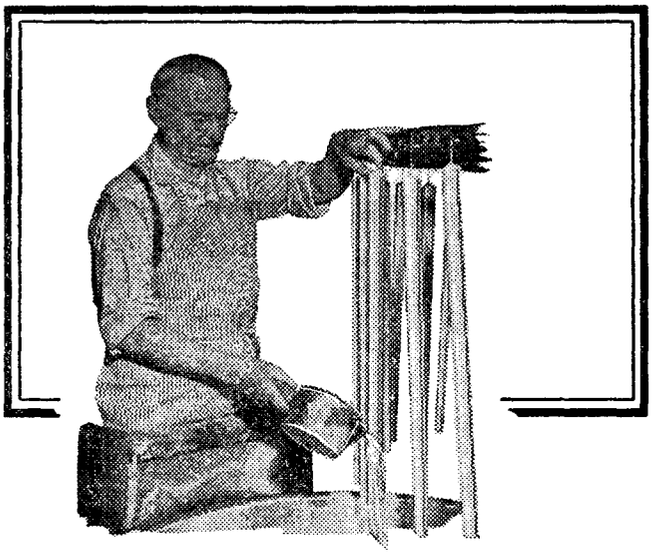

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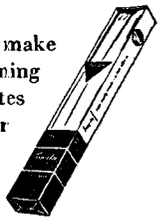

CANDLE CRAFTSMEN FOR NEARLY A HUNDRED YEARS

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Foreign Aid

UNDERSTANDABLY enough, few things in this world give the elected official more pleasure than the opportunity to point out to his constituents his part in any substantial saving of tax dollars. If he can manage this in an election year, so much the better. But when the opportunity arises not only in an election year but immediately after what has been a more than usually painful March 15th, his cup of joy is truly running over.

Under the circumstances it is not hard to understand why the President's foreign aid program is going to run into serious trouble in Congress. He is asking for just short of eight billion dollars. Better than five billion of this is slated for direct military aid — tanks, guns, ammunition — to the free nations of Europe, Asia, the Near East, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific. The purpose of such aid is obvious.

A little less than two billion is earmarked for what is called defense-supporting aid. This part of the program is designed at once to bolster the economy of Western Europe and to speed arms production there. The balance, some $656 million, is slated for outright economic aid and Point Four development, all of it to non-European countries.

Questioning the figures submitted by the Administration is certainly one of the functions of Congress. Bureaucracy being what it is, it is probably true that there are soft spots in almost any budget submitted by the Executive department, and Congress has to probe for these. But foreign aid is something on which it is disastrously easy to practice false economy.

It is important that the reasons behind our foreign aid program be kept in mind. Immediately after World War II American assistance to Europe was largely prompted by the desire to help the war-devastated nations to rebuild. But as the aggressive intentions of the Soviet Union became more clear, the emphasis in our foreign aid program changed.

Now our motives in overseas assistance hinge largely on self-interest. Our national security is bound up beyond recall with the fate of the other nations outside the Soviet orbit. Their strength and ours together may mean the difference between lukewarm and total war. And if all-out war does come, the United States wants as many allies as possible, strong enough to play a vigorous part in the common defense.

As a result, even Point Four programs today have become weapons, more long-range in character than bombs and guns, but weapons nevertheless. To discuss foreign aid as if it were completely selfless charity on our part is misleading in the extreme.

SUBSTANTIAL as the bill for foreign aid admittedly is, the total involved is minor compared to the expense of global war, should one break out. The cost of the Mutual Security program amounts to less than three percent of our constantly rising national output. For our own national security, the foreign aid program adds up to a good insurance investment, measured purely in terms of dollars and cents.

Among the legislators calling for cuts in the foreign aid program, a few have over the years demonstrated their genuine passion for economy. Senator Paul Douglas, for example, not only talks economy when the subject of foreign aid arises, but also votes consistently against domestic pork-barrel measures as well. But men like Senator Douglas are rare. When it comes to Congressional critics whose economy applies only to areas where there are no registered voters, a certain amount of skepticism is in order.

Some pruning of the foreign aid program appears inevitable. If the cuts are not too large, probably no irreparable harm will be done. But

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there should be no substantial slash in the program.

An important road-block in the path of Soviet ambition is now being thrown up abroad. Sometimes the progress on it seems slow to us. Often it does not take just the form we would prefer. But it is being erected. We cannot risk destroying that national asset by crippling the foreign-aid program.

Fateful Choice

WITHIN the past ten days three men have brought forward competing schemes for the future of the historic continent of Europe. Joseph Stalin has called for negotiations on the basis of a neutral, united Germany with her own armed forces, arms industries and freedom to trade. Aneurin Bevan, leader of the left wing of the British Labor Party, has proposed a buffer neutral Europe under Socialist, Third Force leadership. General Eisenhower has urged the foreign ministers of the Council of Europe to convoke a constitutional convention to set up a genuine European Federation.

Of the three contending plans the second has the poorest chances. Even should Mr. Bevan eventually win out in the Labor Party and later succeed Prime Minister Churchill, he would still have to win over the French and other European Socialists, who have yet to manifest much sympathy for him. Moreover, singly as Socialist groups or in alliance as the Third Force, the parties involved have proved too weak and vacillating to provide the leadership required for an independent Europe. It is only the Bevan appeal to neutralism (with the raising of living standards and reduction of arms expenditures) that exerts much attraction in other lands.

At first blow the Russian proposal did not arouse great popular enthusiasm in Western Germany. The sentiment for unity has been touched, but there appears to be little enthusiasm for the revival of the national military set-up. It involves little chance for free elections. The Soviets would fix the Oder-Neisse frontier as permanent at this bargaining stage—much against the wishes of the German people. The Russian plan has the strongest attraction for German industrialists eager for trade with the East and for the men who would be the future military leaders. For the neighboring lands, who have suffered greatly from German militarism in the recent past, the proposal is a frightening one.

And yet observers have marked the conciliatory language in which the proposal is couched and the large concessions which it does embody. It appears to be a serious offer. It may simply be another idle maneuver involving fruitless delays; or it may indicate that the USSR is ready to go to extraordinary lengths to prevent the integration of Western Germany into the North Atlantic community. The stakes are high. And in the end the Russians might throw the lost German provinces into the hopper in order to secure an outright Russo-German alliance.

Even without the Russian element in the picture, however, the reconstitution of a united, independent Germany, complete with army, navy and air force, would be a backward step. It would ignite the old nationalisms, arouse the ancient fears and make certain a German military, economic and political domination of the Continent.

On the other hand, no real opportunity to reach some agreement with the Soviet Union can remain unexplored—and the same goes for any possibility of reuniting Germany. Some would have it that the primary object of NATO is to reach a position from which we can together bargain with the Soviets on equal terms. Others would now say that NATO has carried us beyond that; together with the Schuman Plan it has brought the tragically divided Continent to the point where it can form a union able to make an economic go of things and defend itself.

That is the hope embodied in the Eisenhower proposal, the realization of a dream that is centuries old. Nearly all of it is still in the blueprint stage. It must be unflaggingly nurtured if it is ever to come to be. It will be a strenuous task for all concerned even though it is much more consonant with the sentiments of the various peoples and with present economic realities than the outmoded Russian scheme.

NEXT WEEK

HUGH H. SMYTHE and MABEL M. SMYTHE write from Yamaguchi City of the new Japan.

"Perhaps the first thing which strikes the visitor is the extent to which the personal appearance of the average Japanese has been Westernized. American coiffures are all the vogue. Permanent waves are so much in demand that the number of beauty parlors is constantly increasing. Even in small towns almost all young women have Western haircuts, especially the shoulder-length bob. Western-type cosmetics have found a lucrative market."

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Restricting Soviet Diplomats

IT SEEMS unlikely that any Western diplomat could welcome assignment to the Soviet Union. Rigidly restricted in his movements, cut off from contacts with the local citizens, under constant observation by the secret police, diplomats in Russia lead lives far different from the glamorous picture usually conjured up by the idea of foreign service.

Recently these already stringent restrictions were made even more severe. Now fully half the country is completely out of bounds for the foreigner, including many of the principal cities in Russia. For any trip which will take the diplomat more than twenty-five miles from Moscow, special permission is required.

There has always been considerable sentiment in this country in favor of retaliation in kind. Until recently that pressure has been resisted. Now the United States, France, Britain, Italy and the Netherlands, acting in conjunction, have clamped down restrictions on travel by Soviet diplomats. Other Atlantic pact nations are expected to follow suit. From now on, official Soviet representatives in this country will have to give twenty-four hours notice for trips outside a twenty-five mile radius of Washington and New York.

Fear of espionage does not seem to have entered into this decision. Too many Soviet and satellite representatives of various kinds are unaffected by the new ruling for it to be an effective anti-espionage measure. Protecting our defense installations from enemy observation takes other and, we hope, more practical forms than this ruling.

Instead our new travel curbs seem designed to let the Soviet rulers know that in this sphere, as in others, we intend in the future to meet strength with strength, blow with blow. The hope is expressed that the Russians will find our restrictions on their diplomats sufficiently irksome that they will relax their own curbs, however unlikely this may seem.

Coming as it does on top of many indignities suffered by American citizens at the hands of Soviet satellites, there is little doubt that this measure aimed at the mother country will win widespread popular support. But despite the emotional appeal of the action, we seriously doubt its wisdom. Such a clear-cut imitation of Soviet tactics seems to us an all too clear indication of the way the world is going these days.

Once we have protected ourselves from espionage, our national security is not served by imitating Soviet tactics in such matters. Unlike the Soviet, we have neither concentration camps nor slave labor to conceal from the world. We have nothing to fear from inspection by anyone.

In the contest for men's loyalties, this contrast between US freedom and Soviet totalitarianism constitutes our strongest argument. It is foolish to throw away this invaluable asset by imitating our opponent on his weakest point.

Crucial Election

IN THE half century since the Reclamation Act was put through in the Theodore Roosevelt Administration it has withstood a number of attacks. At the time, and down to this day, its object has been to provide irrigation for the arid tracts of family-size farms. There have been various minor amendments, but up to now the Reclamation Bureau has withstood all sorts of pressure to waive the provision that precludes from its low-cost benefits all tracts exceeding one hundred and sixty acres.

With the development of giant commercial farming in California the pressure has grown intense. Demands from the mass-production growers in the Central and San Joaquin Valleys have been increasingly insistent.

Now, in the King's River Conservancy District near Fresno, a bitter contest is in progress. Nine-tenths of the land is owned by small farmers but large owners are strong in the lower section, these latter powerful enough to have the Army Engineers rather than the Reclamation Bureau build the Valley's Pine Flats Dam.

That indicates the issue to be decided in an election in the King's River district, April 8. If the people succeed in naming a Board of Directors friendly to the small farmer, the 160-acre limit will hold. Otherwise the directors can get round the Reclamation Bureau, and its acreage limit, by borrowing and paying off the federal government at once for the dam construction costs. This in turn would make the cost of irrigation for the small farmers in the area prohibitive. It would set an unhappy precedent for other reclamation projects.

The New White House

FIRST reviews and immediate reactions to William Hillman's *Mr. President* do not make out that volume to be the overpowering campaign document expected. The primaries in New Hampshire and Minnesota do not encourage Mr. Truman to run again. But Mr. Truman's rebuilding

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of the White House is of an extremely permanent character. The huge all-electric kitchen will be up to preparing dinner for a hundred guests and lighter refreshments for ten times that number. White House floors are now of reinforced concrete and rooms are insulated from noises throughout.

The Trumans are to move back to the substantially furnished official mansion some time next month. For all the candor of *Mr. President,* Harry Truman is still keeping mum on how long they plan to stay.

An American Catholic View of Catholic Spain

The following editorial is reprinted with permission from the March 14 issue of the Indiana Catholic and Record, *official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.*

IF THE surprising remarks of the Spanish Cardinal Segura have been reported accurately, they are sure to strain the charitable efforts of Americans—Catholic as well as Protestant—to understand the Spanish mentality. The Cardinal is reported to have complained in a pastoral letter that "Protestant proselytism, having broken the dikes of tolerance, is not hesitating to advance on the open field toward religious freedom in our country."

Catholic writers who have been painfully explaining that religious freedom, of a Spanish sort, exists in Spain will certainly be embarrassed by the Cardinal's blunt admission that religious freedom is an evil to be avoided at all costs. Some Catholic comment will doubtless fall into the rather tired and unimpressive line that Catholics are persecuted in some Protestant countries too.

We think it is high time to admit that Spain is quite a bit behind the times. Everyone knows that Spain is a good century behind the leaders of the Western world industrially and agriculturally. But in the matter of religious harmony Spain seems to be roughly four centuries in arrears. For some obscure reasons Spanish churchmen do not seem to be ready to admit what happened around 1520—namely the Protestant Revolt.

Cardinal Segura's reported remarks would have had a timely ring if they had been uttered in 1552. However, it seems a bit fatuous to cling at this date to the attitude that the Protestant heresy is a dangerous threat which can be forestalled only by vigilance and rigorous control. Elsewhere in the world Catholics and Protestants have long since passed through the stage of refusing to acknowledge each other's existence

Catholics in other countries, while equally zealous and orthodox in their adherence to the Faith, see Protestantism not as a threat but as a fact. They hold quite as strongly as Cardinal Segura that Protestantism is a heresy, that it teaches serious errors in doctrine. They deplore too the harm to a united Christendom which the Protestant Revolt has caused. But in America, and elsewhere, competition, not suppression, has been the automatic reaction.

It seems to us that Cardinal Segura, Dictator Franco and others in Spain should take a look at their history books. Not only could they discover that the Protestant Revolt actually did happen and had rather considerable repercussions all over the world, but they might also notice that any persecution—short of extermination—has invariably strengthened the persecuted religion in the long run. Catholics should be the last to forget that.

Another point that history might clarify is that Protestantism has lost by this time most of the vigor and drive that once characterized it and brought it such conquests. Whenever Protestantism is met by a strong informed Catholicism today, there is simply no contest. When the Spanish leaders tire of the history review which we suggest for them, they might gaze abroad at the current religious scene.

One point that might occur easily is that Protestantism is the wrong dragon today. Any lances that can be spared from the anti-Communist battle had better be tossed at other targets than Protestantism. A second lesson from current history might be derived from a comparison of the vitality and vigor of American Catholicism flourishing in a Protestant stronghold, with the protected and over-advertised brand of Catholicism in Spain.

To some these remarks may smack of religious jingoism, but we feel it is past time for American Catholics to be relieved from the oppressive burden of our Spanish brethren. We have spent weary hours cleaning up the blood the Spaniards overzealously spilled in the Inquisition. If they wish to call the cops on the Protestants four centuries late they can take the blame themselves. Let them fend for themselves against the slings and arrows of world opinion.

In time, we trust, even the Spaniards will recognize that although religious error has really no rights, the heretics who hold the error do have certain fundamental rights which the state must respect and protect—rights that the Popes as head of the Papal States preserved for the Jews and Waldensians in the Eternal City itself.

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Symbols: Hiss and Pound

The histories of both men provide a lesson, and it is not "stop being avant-garde, stop being liberal."

By PETER VIERECK

ALGER HISS and Ezra Pound are the two ghosts at the happy feast of Babbitt Junior (who is none other than our old friend Comrade Blimp, the robot Babbitt of revolt, the philistine-baiting philistine, the avant-garde that has become a last rearguard resistance to the revolt against revolt). Hiss and Pound are the ghosts whose implication Babbitt Junior evades with concealed panic.

Yet the implication is plain. It knocks at every locked door of the mind. It knocks too loudly to be evaded too long. For years these two brilliant Americans were the heroes of progressivism in politics and literature respectively. That both heroes ended as they did, is partly coincidence. Not wholly.

What is the lesson when progressivism, after sincerely setting out to liberate literature and politics, ends by flirting with treason? Avant-garde and liberalism, the two halves of Babbitt Junior, in culture and politics, won't face the lesson. But more detached minds must insist on its being faced. They must insist on "vulgarly" and tactlessly rubbing the face of American progressivism in Ezra Pound and Alger Hiss.

Whenever conversing with the robot tribes of Babbitt Junior, you must steer the conversation toward Hiss and Pound with the seeming obsessiveness of a dentist drilling near an exposed nerve. This is hardly the road to popularity!—every Socrates is likely to end up with hemlock in his cocktail—but it is the road to truthful understanding.

Toward Hiss and Pound personally, the only decent reaction is not vindictiveness but compassionate human sympathy: "judge not that ye be not judged." Nor is there any danger that the familiar esthetic contribution of a *miglior fabbro* will ever be bilked of its deserved admirers and endless commentators. But personal considerations and esthetic considerations are at least partly irrelevant to assessing the role of both men as impersonal moral symbols. They were the dominant prestige-symbols of the two alternative poses adopted by Babbitt Junior in the Thirties and Forties. Either "social significance" or else literary mandarinism: these were the two club-handshakes needed for admission into the Rotarian-baiting Rotaria of intellectual chic.

Two ironies cut across both cases and distract the unwary from the moral symbolism:

1. Neither man is confined for his real crime. Like Capone, who could only be confined for income tax evasion, Hiss could only be confined for perjury. The statute of limitations prevents his treason trial. Pound likewise had no treason trial for his pro-Axis broadcasts to American soldiers during the war in Italy. His hospital confinement prevented it.

2. As a further irony, there are some who exploit both cases undisinterestedly. They exploit our distress over Hiss by turning it indiscriminately not merely against fellow-traveling but against all liberalism, against all mild social reform, against that entire complex mixture of good and bad known as the New Deal. Others exploit our distress over Pound by turning it indiscriminately not merely against fascism but against all modern art and all experimental poetry, likewise a complex mixture of good and bad. Those who attack Hiss and Pound for unscrupulous reasons, cause both to be far more widely defended than would otherwise be the case. Result: a few honest anti-communazis defend both crimes, against their better judgment, lest they allegedly "play into the hands" of reaction and philistia.

FORTUNATELY the sound half of the reforms of modern poetry (post-1912), and likewise of the New Deal, are rooted too solidly now to be discredited. The unsound, bogus half of both ought indeed to be reassessed more critically.

Justice will be done; art, if truly art and not coterie, outlasts politics. If Pound has truly made the artistic contribution which his admirers believe

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This article will be included in a book, "Shame and Glory of the Intellectuals," to be published later this year. Mr. Viereck teaches at Mount Holyoke.

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he has made, then I hope the future will reward him by remembering only his poems and not his ephemeral rantings against "President Rosenfelt" and "Jew York."

To whitewash Hiss and to blacken Chambers (whose only real sin is his maudlin prose-style), has become a compulsive defense-mechanism for all liberals who once fellow-traveled with Stalinism. During 1930-47, they befriended its fronts, parroted its poppycock, but lacked Hiss's guts for logically translating a criminal ideology into criminal action. Today every word against Hiss awakens certain half-conscious memories. It awakens their long-suppressed, semi-treasonable, semi-idealistic day-dreams about Russia in that early era of Writers Congresses and Leagues against War and Fascism. Where they merely strip-teased with revolution for the thrill of feeling progressive and unbourgeois, Hiss is the intellectual who really meant business and eloped. Those passionate but unconsummated flirtations of the Thirties, once so chic and dashing, are no longer fashionable memories, after Korea. The Hiss case is the bad conscience of all America's political *demi-vierges*.

In future decades, Hiss may become an "epic figure," the mythic national symbol of the whole guilty 1930's. The guilt is "tragic," in the true sense of the word, by being intermingled with the noble social idealism of the 1930's, which inspired the heroes of the anti-fascist resistance movements and some parts of the New Deal. Here are the five Freudian slips, already standardized reflexes and all around you, by which the bad consciences of lumpen-intellectuals of the Thirties reveal themselves in casual conversation in the Fifties:

(1) belittling the importance or influence of Hiss's high posts;
(2) finding excuses or doubts on his behalf which the excusers would not raise in the parallel cases of a Fritz Kuhn or a Vidkung Quisling;
(3) alleging that the verdict "reflects war hysteria, not objective evidence," though not alleging the same about the verdict against Laval;
(4) being the life of the party by spreading scandalous rumors against Mr. Chambers and his act of public service and moral atonement;
(5) worst of all, simply refusing to *see* the broader implications of the case, like a shell-shock victim suffering from hysterical blindness.

The big mistake of the 1930's was to justify any means, or any associations, by your "worthy" end. Most liberals are guilty of looking with indulgence during the Thirties on Popular-Fronting under Stalinist murderers ("justified" by anti-fascism). Most reactionaries are guilty of looking with indulgence during the Thirties on appeasement of Nazi murderers ("justified" by anti-Communism). The last point requires particular emphasis because the lunatic-fringe (or thought-controlling) kind of anti-Communist indicts only the liberals, forgetting that the eternal enemy is neither Communism nor Nazism but Communazism, eternally protean.

Past guilt need not hang like an albatross around the present; nobody should be persecuted for honest past mistakes. But the only way to slough off past mistakes, is to admit them.

TO FACE the guilt of Hiss and Pound, to accept it in a "change of heart," is the magic by which Babbitt Junior can exorcize his own Babbittry. It is the only magic to make him the independent mind he sincerely wants to be. To rejuvenate his progressivism and make it valid.

The lesson of Pound and Hiss is not, as literary and political reactionaries may claim: "Stop being avant-garde, stop being liberal." The lesson is: "Don't stop, but—watch your step!" The lesson is: "Become genuine apostles of literary and political progress by watching the moral correlative of progress more sensitively in the future."

Pound and Hiss do not invalidate experimental avant-garde. They do not invalidate liberalism. They do not even invalidate honest revolutionary radicalism. What they do invalidate—no more, no less than that—is a hermetic, narcissistic progressivism, so self-absorbed in artistic or political progress that it neglects the inexorable moral framework into which all progress must fit.

Some day Babbitt Junior may stand in front of his mirror, saying of Pound and Hiss,

"God have mercy on two miserable sinners! And likewise on the human frailty of all the rest of us, who happen not to end in bedlam or in prison. There but for the grace of God go I."

When that day comes, the spell will snap; the albatross of guilt will fall; he will cease to be Babbitt Junior. Or Babbitt Senior. Instead, the matured human being will step from the adolescent cocoon. It is the step from the disgrace of lumpen-intellectualism to the grace of intelligence. Upon the razor-thin hair-breadth between them, nothing less than the very soul of America's confused intellectuals depends today.

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The Lost Liberals

"For a few of us, it is a matter for regret that it is no longer tenable, or practical, or loyal to have been even a small liberal."

By DORIS GRUMBACH

TO Rose Macauley the word "nostalgia" meant "pain connected with homecoming." The liberal of the Thirties must now feel such a pain, such nostalgia, at reading Herbert Philbrick and Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley who, among them, occupy a good deal of recent heavy-coated magazine space and newsprint. The present has become the era of public breast-beating, paid-by-the-word revelation and penance; this is the age of the political *mea-culpa*. But for a few of us less public citizens, at home and out-of-print with our nostalgia, it is a matter for regret that it is no longer tenable, or practical, or loyal, to have been a liberal, even a *small* one.

To the reading public today the liberal is a ludicrous and anachronistic figure, or else he is a highly suspicious figure, probably an assimilated, "passed-over" Red who could, if enough subpoenas were issued for him, tell horrendous tales of espionage, sabotage and civil disobedience. If there are many young college or white-collar or labor liberals left, they are strangely inarticulate today. The mass of untagged intellectuals seems content to be silent, or worse, to hide behind the socially acceptable and protective coloring of hyper-orthodoxy. It is safe, it is secure, it is for all the good, unassailable things like the Flag, the Little Man, the Big Man, and the divinely guided yet self-made entrepreneur.

This is definitive of our time. The Fifties are suffering a severe reaction from the strenuous acts of personal justification that marked the Thirties, and the sudden catapulting into the bannered regimentation and unabated patriotism of the long war years. We have been told for so long that the only acceptable foreign policy is bipartisan, that the only tenable domestic policy is conformist and uniformist, and that the perfect citizen is silent, agreeable, and perpetually in step.

Now even more stringent facts face the young citizen in his choice of political philosophy: the strainer for government jobs is closer meshed than ever and the successful candidate is always fodder for big investigative guns; the universities *want no trouble* with trustees or legislatures in these days of hard-pressed budgets; private industry has leaped joyfully to the adoption of the loyalty oath, wondering why they didn't think of it a long time ago.

To a certain extent this tightening has been a good thing. It has caught a few disloyal and potentially dangerous persons—without further evidence to the contrary we must assume that Alger Hiss is one of these and the Communist leaders are others—but in another sense it has been unfortunate. It has hushed some frightened young voices that should, for the future benefit of their points-of-view, now be trying out their liberal chords on small issues, flexing their muscles in the acts of public interest and welfare, accustoming their eyes to discerning injustice and social hardship without inbred class prejudice.

It would seem as if this era of public confession and the Big Scare will serve to harden them in the comfortable safeties of conservatism, expedient political faith and reaction long before the softening agents of public concern and sympathy have had a chance to do their work.

I REMEMBER a few things about my college years in the Thirties. Those memories must hold at least in part for many of those who were the blotting-paper of culture and political realism in those days. At Columbia, three miles away, Thomas Merton was listening to the same sort of speeches I heard, at the same sort of meetings, almost at the same time. We were living in a post-war-prewar world then, composed of depression, unemployment and growing fascist movements in Europe. Those of us who were of middle-class origin, in institutions which held the establishments of the middle-class to be sacred, had queasy consciences.

We confined our guilty radicalism to books. I remember reading Stephen Spender's *Forward From Liberalism* and Max Eastman and Ralph Fox and Granville Hicks and Kenneth Burke and Malcolm Cowley and I remember feeling very

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Mrs. Grumbach before her marriage was a member of the staff of Time magazine.

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wild. We found the classic Marxist texts—*Anti-Dühring* and *Das Kapital* and Lenin's *Imperialism* too hard-going for our tastes, but we avidly consumed the critical offshoots and creative children of the dogma. Our radicalism drove us to few deeds of doubtful valor; but it did, to a surprising extent, bring us into intimate company with literary, artistic and musical radicals of our time: Gide, Kafka, Eliot, Auden, Isherwood, MacLeish, Spender, Koestler, and Rouault, Matisse, Picasso, Deran, and Prokofieff, Shostakovitch, etc.

The few things we did left no historic marks on Greenwich Village. Yet, in the sum total of things remembered they linger strangely in the mind, far longer than the body of classroom facts now so successfully forgotten. I remember how cold and hostile the New York waterfront dawn was morning after morning during the dock strike of 1938 as we few sleepy-eyed Juniors assembled behind the coffee tables set out on the street corners and served the striking longshoremen.

Somehow it now seems to me we understood too little of the issues, except those which involved our awareness of vague injustice. To us these were men who were enacting the dry-as-dust theorems of Social Science II. They were colder, hungrier and less secure than we, and the bus ride back to the university in time for first classes found us shriven of our guilt-feelings, filled with a sense of being alive and among other live human beings, an impression it is not always easy to acquire in the stacks of a university library or at student-faculty conferences. No doubt the Reds were actively working at our sides, perhaps even issuing the orders. Some of the students with us may have been Communists too. But I cannot convince myself that this detracted from the long-term value of the experience.

I also remember walking up and down with a sandwich board plastered to my back in front of a Greenwich Village tearoom that had refused to serve Negro students. I remember sitting in the front pew of a courtroom while Magistrate Anna Kross fined a student who had been found guilty of disturbing the peace of Washington Square; he had erected a loud speaker to proclaim the mass swearing to the Oxford Oath, that futile, bravado blow that thoughtful students of the Thirties struck for the peace they thought they wanted. I think we were aware of the potentials of action, even if we were too young, too inexperienced and too angry, most of the time, to evaluate them correctly. Perhaps the geography of the university helped our awareness: we were surrounded physically by sweat shops, Italian slums, docks, flophouses and the more prosperous and pretentious bohemia of the Village. The insulating effect of rolling green quadrangles never touched us.

BUT alas, the Probe and Confession and Investigation have revealed that our fellows may have been Communists, that some of their guilt has, by osmosis or association or contagion, come off on us, and that our education in awareness by activity should rapidly be forgotten, even better, denied. The times, and the furious temper of the postwar world have made cowards of us, and, worse, of those who are now where we were fifteen years ago.

How well I know! Years of this prevailing national disposition has sapped my courage as well. The other day I received a mailed circular about the case of the Trenton Two, the Negroes still imprisoned for life without adequate proof of their guilt, and long after their fellows, similarly convicted, have been pardoned. Did I react firmly, indignantly, actively? I did not. First I found myself carefully examining the cast of sponsors at the bottom of the letter, then I considered the address and the possible ramifications of such support. Could it mean . . .? My name used, perhaps . . .? And as I hemmed and hawed, the feeling of revulsion for myself grew. Like the others I have been scared into the enclosures of caution and conservatism. Too bad, I thought, and tossed the circular into the basket. Too bad, indeed.

In Coming Issues—

Compton Mackenzie
on Approaching Seventy

William Clancy
on Leisure in a Bourgeois World

Martin Turnell
on Crashaw and Patmore

Harold C. Hinton & Freda Utley
in a Debate on U. S. Policy in China

Gunnar D. Kumlien
on the Nomadelphia Incident

William E. McManus
on Stokes' "Church and State in the U. S."

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Karl Marx and Materialism

By VICTOR WHITE

MARXISM is undeniably the most powerful challenge to religion of our time, if not of all time. When we have estimated the enormous military might which Marxist governments and parties now have at their disposal, the vast material resources, the huge proportions of the earth's surface, the teeming millions of human beings at their command, we have only begun to estimate its power.

Indeed if we think of these alone, we have not so much as begun to assess its inner strength, and we are already on the way to becoming the victims of its own materialistic ideology. We have to understand the fascination which has enabled it to gather to itself even this material might.

When all has been said of the brutality of its leaders, of secret police and labor camps, of denunciations and purges and liquidations, the fact must be faced that Marxist Communism inspires in millions a conviction, a faith and a hope, an enthusiasm and self-abnegation, a sense of release and of solidarity—which even the Pope, in his Christmas Allocution, contrasted with the bewildered disillusion of youth in the "free world." Perhaps even more impressive than the devotion it can arouse in its party-line conformists, is the agony of genuine remorse it can produce (as Koestler and others have told us) in the renegades, the purged and the liquidated themselves.

WHENCE this power and fascination? Perhaps Marxism's greatest danger lies in the fact that it is so little felt and understood by most of those who oppose it. Marxism is labeled materialistic; and we tend to dismiss it as some drab positivist theory which can see no further than solids, liquids and gases.

This is not the time to expound, let alone to criticize, the intricacies of Dialectical Materialism. But it is well to recall that such crude, purely theoretic materialism was vigorously *attacked* by Marx and Engels in their criticisms of Dühring and Feuerbach. What Dialectical Materialism in effect professes to offer is nothing less attractive and intoxicating than fully conscious collaboration with the underlying laws of nature in the struggle of blind necessity to attain consciousness and freedom; the goal, "not of understanding the world but of changing it." Marxism is labeled atheistic, and we tend to think of a dreary, colorless rationalism, a merely theoretic negation of the merely theoretic affirmation of Divine reality. Yet such theoretic atheism and agnosticism were declared by Marx to be every bit as much a futile "scholasticism" as their contrary. For the good Marxist, the affirmation and denial of the existence of God are equally meaningless—and in this the most respected bourgeois philosophers of our day appear to agree with him.

Yet, said Marx, "criticism of religion is the foundation of all criticism." This is so, given his 'Dialectical' interpretation of history, because only when the social and economic function of religion was understood, could it be transmuted into "revolutionary, that is, practical-critical activity."

IT IS in this context we must read the famous slogan about the "opium of the people." Whatever may have been the positive function of religion in the past in promoting the evolution of history, it is now nothing but an opiate, blinding the proletariat to its own destiny. Marx is only echoing Varro's "It is in the interest of states to be deceived in religion." That religion is a potent instrument of law, order and government, and therefore of the ruling classes, was no new discovery of Marx; but on that account Marx saw it as the chief obstacle to revolution, itself the supposed prelude to the 'withering away' of the State and the introduction of the blissful classless society.

In this sense, and in this sense only, the Marxist is 'anti-God.' If he is consistent with Marx himself, he does not *advocate* atheism. The Communist Manifesto claims only to "express . . . actual relations springing from an existing class-struggle . . . a historical movement going on under our very eyes." "To defend or attack the movement (of history) is not our purpose; our duty is discharged in the simple attestation of its progress."

The Marxist claims to call us only to honest recognition of what has actually happened; and few will care to dispute his observation of the fact of "the decay of religious authority"; or to deny that "the days in which religious considerations were a governing element in the conflicts of Western Europe are long gone by"; or that "from the period of the Reformation, the upper classes in every European nation . . . began to unfasten themselves individually from all effective religious belief." It is not easy to dispute Lenin's contention that the abortive Russian revolution of 1905, when the workers bearing ikons were led by the priest Gapon with their petition to the Tsar, only to be mowed down by his Cossacks—that this attempted revolution failed because the workers were "too Christian," and that that very fact blinded them to the harsh realities of their situation.

This is the last in a series of four articles. Father White, of the Order of Preachers, is stationed at the Dominican House at Oxford.

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WHATEVER Marxists may mean exactly by the transmutation of religion into critical and revolutionary activity, it certainly does not mean a repudiation of everything that historically has belonged to religion; on the contrary the power of Marxism would seem due largely to the fact that it secularizes religion, revitalizes it and harnesses its immense resources to the revolutionary struggle.

Berdyaev was surely right in seeing that the appeal of Marxism lay less in its intellectual analyses, or even in its appeal to the class interests of the masses, than in its potent mythology. This Marxist myth he sees in its almost Jewish Messianism; its promise of redemption and liberation for the oppressed, to be attained only through "a great tribulation." It is the *mythos* of the Chosen, Messianic people who will conquer and save the world; but these are now, not the stock of Abraham, but the oppressed and exploited of the world, who are nevertheless the actual producers of its wealth, and have only to become aware of their power, conscious that they have all to gain for posterity, and nothing to lose but their chains.

This is the *mythos* that inspires alike the devotion of the party-member in Capitalist economies, the Red Army soldier, the Malayan 'bandit,' the underpaid Comsomol member, even the deviationist's abject confession. Berdyaev has shown that the *mythos* is already implicit in Marx's own writings, however inconsistently with his historical determinism; but it has been immensely fortified in Lenin-Stalinism which, whatever its departures from determinism, is the only version of Marxism which has stood up to Marx's own criterion of practical success.

Marxism has in fact seized upon, not only Marx's own latent Jewish Messianism, but upon the most powerful and universal archetypal motif; the motif of resurrection through death, of a new cosmos through chaos, the divinity of man to be disclosed through self-sacrifice. It even has its miraculous resurrection; for, as some Soviet philosophers have recently found at the expense of severe reprimand from the party-organ *Bolshevik,* the promised "jump" from necessity to freedom, from Socialist dictatorship of the proletariat to the withering away of the State and the inauguration of Communism, is no matter for scientific investigation or rational scrutiny.

MARXISM, in short, only denies God in the sense of setting on record that He is, in our society, in practice denied and ineffectual, and in the sense of echoing the Satanic assurance, "*You* shall be as God." Its power against contemporary Christianity lies in the fact that it has stolen Christ's thunder; the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, of the triumph of the Son of Man, the reign in some new dimension of reality of the despised and rejected.

Marxism has made its own the eschatological preaching of deliverance for the oppressed, and damnation for the powerful and rich, wherewith Christianity itself first gained the masses of the Roman Empire. But just because it is the ape of God and His Christ, the Christian must see in Marxism a supreme embodiment of the spirit of Anti-Christ; the corruption of the best, which is worst of all.

How is he to respond to this challenge? First of all he must understand and appreciate it, or he can never meet it at all. More disturbing than any theory of drugs or torture to account for the cowed behavior of some ecclesiastics at Communist State trials, was the suggestion put forward by a writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* (London) that perhaps in prison they had heard for the first time the Marxist creed of godlessness put forward by a convinced adherent.

It would therefore seem by no means idle for the Christian to refurbish even the old evidences and arguments for his own beliefs; for, in spite of Marxist theory, man is incurably metaphysical and persists in asking "what is what," the ultimate "whence and whither," and not merely "how come." And if there be a God, that fact and its practical consequence must override even the most accurate appraisal of the social and economic function of a decadent religion in a decaying social set-up. The matter of God's existence is of paramount importance. It is the key question which no serious consideration may avoid, and the Christian should be prepared to answer it clearly.

YET such argument can never meet Marxism on its own ground, nor refute the contentions of its criticism of religion. The distinctive challenge of Marxism lies in the fact that it is not just a theory that can be countered by an opposing theory, or solely by reason.

We are not dealing with a system that claims its confirmation in identities of being, but in action and practice. Hence Christian theory alone is powerless against it; and the constructive Christian criticism of Marxism must be less the task of the philosopher than of the Christlike saint. Marxism, which is a sort of theory conformed to practice, can be adequately met only by Christian practice conformed to belief.

If the challenges which Christianity has met in the past have been mostly challenges to Christian belief, and so opportunities for its development and enrichment, the providential purpose of Marxism would seem rather its challenge to Christian living, and so a providential call to practical holiness. It will be the sort of holiness which will be ready to say with Father Tong Che-tche before his Communist judges at Chungking on June 3rd last year:

"Gentlemen, I have only one soul and it cannot be divided: but I have a body which can be broken up. It seems best for me to offer my soul, whole and entire to God, and my body to my country; if it wants it, I do not refuse it. . . . I am a Catholic, but I have a very great admiration for the Communists . . . they have more than one quality which forces my admiration. . . . The first of these qualities in the Communists is their readiness to face death. . . . A Christian capable of betraying God is no longer fit for anything but to betray the Church and his country. . . . I will spare no sacrifice, praying in the hope that the earthly life I offer today may be the price of the conversion of the generation to come."

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SO THEY TELL ME

The Meaning of Victory in Joseph Conrad

LIKE Euclid making his famous announcement about parallel lines, Graham Greene observed that "two of the great novels of the last fifty years (are) *The Spoils of Poynton* and *Victory*." Having made his judgment, he then passes on. But he does not let us pass on with him: we are halted by such casualness as, perhaps, he expected us to be. We postpone our journey with Greene to return to Conrad. We find the old copy of *Victory* loose-seamed like a derelict; its pages are dry and crepitant from too much winter heat. Its condition is a symbol of our treatment of him. For on Conrad, as on all great novelists, there has been imposed the undeserved penance of obscurity. It is as if we condemn them for a time to a kind of literary purgatory from which patient time shall rescue them for the delectation of another generation. But these are signs, like the republication of *Under Western Eyes,* and the paper edition of *The Heart of Darkness,* that Conrad is to be released from the shades.

After so many years the first thing that strikes you about *Victory* is its language. The jungle lushness of the prose through which one cuts his labyrinthine way in *The Nigger of the Narcissus,* in *Almayer* and many others, the dark caesura of poetry, are gone. Here in this novel Conrad has related the essentials of language to the essentials of character.

For the rest we are back in a familiar world. Conrad, as always, is giving us bits of his story, and then going back over it, relating one action which we have seen to an event we are about to know, illuminating through another character, something we already have some knowledge of. For Conrad has learned somewhere to delay his story, withholding it and concealing it while in the very act of giving it to us. But it is not only that he wants to weight his narrative with suspense—it is also because he is aware that men are not revealed in a moment, or in a single act. He is aware that they have a history, and that they act and think and live in function of that history; that it is a painful, slow, and even agonizing thing to rid themselves of what Graham Greene chooses to designate as "the burden of childhood."

It is, of course, also because Conrad's men (I do not think that this is especially true of his women) live and act out their dramas in a moral universe whose boundaries, Conrad thinks, must be defined with both precision and subtlety. For Conrad is engaged with heroes, with men who live alone in a world which they largely self-define, in whom conscience is tested by events and a man's choice of action in respect of them.

In this sense it is true to say that Conrad is obsessed with man's moral habit, as it is true to say that in every novel he is writing the same story—as Henry James, or any other great novelist, is writing the same story. What does man do in moral solitude? Will he betray men, and in doing it has he betrayed himself? Does his betrayal shadow him the whole length of his nights and days unless it is possible for him, as it is necessary for him, to atone for his treason?

IN *Under Western Eyes* Conrad allows one of his people to say that "no human being could bear a steady view of moral solitude without going mad." Indeed Kurtz goes mad. In the same book it is observed that "all a man can betray is his conscience." But such a man, like Lord Jim, is followed; he carries his secret knowledge with him on all the ships, through all the seas and ports of the world. The tumult of his treason, or of his failure, is always in his heart, and there is no escape so long as he shall live.

In *Victory* Heyst's treason is the strongest of all which we meet in the works of a man who acutely knew that our moral lives are constantly imperiled. For, if we may speak of it that way, Heyst has committed sin against life, against the instincts and the authentic and ensnaring impulses of life, and his sin is an in-turning, a withdrawal.

Heyst thinks that all our lives are at one with destiny, so he resolves to become and to remain detached from it. And he loses the power of assertion: "I don't mean," says Conrad in a note, "the courage of self-assertion, either moral or physical, but the mere way of it, the trick of the thing, the readiness of mind, and the turn of the hand that come without reflection, and lead a man to excellence in life, in art, in crime and for the matter of that, even in love." And for this lack, for this deliberately cultivated habit, Heyst's triumphant, brave and lovely lady pays with her dearest life, and Heyst chooses to take his own in a confused sense of retribution, burning his life, to put it like that, in some last resort to the ancient belief that "fire purifies everything," perhaps even Heyst's apostasy, his failure of love.

CONRAD regarded himself as an artist, and his many prefaces are as full of revelations of his purposes as they are of revelations of the geographical origins of his characters. He is rigorously honest with himself: "I am not likely to offer pinchbeck wares to my public consciously." He is at least as severely honest with the creatures of his mind and imagination. I am never more conscious of this than when I am reading *Victory*. "Art itself," he held, "may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe."

What continues to astonish me, besides Conrad's incisively penetrating understanding of his character Heyst, his poised sustaining of the essence of his character to the very last, is the novelist's fairness to Heyst. He takes him seriously; he gives him a psychological origin and a home. He never demeans him or cheapens him. He never lets go of his understanding of him; he sees him in whole and in parts: "I wouldn't be suspected even remotely of mak-

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ing fun of Axel Heyst. I have always liked him."

At this point I want to take Conrad's novel so seriously as to suggest that it has other meaning than might easily be read into it in 1914. Conrad's Heyst is not only a person conceived in the mind of a great novelist, and developed and sustained throughout a long book with astonishing skill. He is, I think, the prototype of the political neutralist of our unhappy and agonized generation.

Anyone who has recently read *Under Western Eyes* must grant that Conrad was gifted with extraordinary insight. The reading of it confirms Gide's remark that the book contained "prophetic reflections about the Russian soul." For our age it is, as Mr. Morton Zabel puts it, in a penetrating introduction to The New Classic Series edition, "a parable and a portent." I like to think that such a phrase applies to *Victory,* that Heyst the unperturbed, almost disdainful, austere man of detachment is the original modern neutralist, and that his life and death contain a parable. I am especially reinforced in this opinion by Raymond Aron's article in the *New Leader* of February 25, called "France's Intellectuals and Stalinism."

Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Mr. Aron points out, having at last admitted the existence of Russian concentration camps, maintain nonetheless that "While they are not Communists, still less are they anti-Communists." I am not suggesting that the political neutralist, who does not wish to be "liberated again" is caught up, as are these two, by and in the Marxist mythology. They are not guilty of saying, as do these two, that in France "the Communist Party is the party of the working class. It cannot be opposed without striking at the workers themselves." But I am saying that, whatever the given reason, one who abstains from moral and intellectual engagement in the great conflict of our time is giving aid and comfort to our enemy. It cannot be otherwise.

HEYST, the central figure in this novel, said that "All action is bound to be harmful." He was not "a fighting man," and he regarded life as if it were a plot. He was a neutral, abhorring any action, fastidiously abstaining from engagement in it. "Look on—make no sound" were the last defeating words of his defeated father who, dying, left Heyst on the bank of the stream of life. "In his pride he determined not to enter it." But because he was without power "to defend himself against compassion," Heyst took the lady, Lena, under his sudden and impulsive protection.

Conrad has put away, in this book, the romantic Doña Ritas of earlier novels. Nowhere else has he created a woman like Heyst's Lena. She, hurt, harassed, helpless and hopeless, gives to Heyst that illusion which is necessary "lest men should renounce life early and the human race come to an end." She gives to him the ardor to live.

Like all women, she is the symbol of life, the potential conceiver of life, the carrier of life who, alone, could emotionalize his mind and spirit, our lives and spirits. For through women, alone, do we have the power to create what immortality we ever know on earth. Appealing to him out of the black shadows which surround her nights, this woman of the lovely and arresting voice, this woman also called Alma, and called, also, Magdalen, brings to him the only love he was ever to know.

Heyst takes her to his physical refuge, his island where "nothing can break in on us here." What breaks in on them is life, the unforeseen, the unpredictable. "The world itself," as Mr. Jones puts it, came to pay Heyst a visit.

Mr. Jones was violence, the user of violence having all the advantages such a one has over the man of peace, over one who is "disarmed and shrinking from the ugliness and degradation of it." Jones is tired, languid, austere; his pale, exhausted blood suffers from his spasms of excitement; he is perverted by the emaciated and unfulfilled desire for strength, and he is given to compensatory phrases, as his eyes are hot with glitter in his vicious, spectral face.

His partner, Ricardo, of the faithful retainer class, wants to be in the shadow of power, the SS man, the NKVD man, wholly identified with the murderous leader—the final irony produced by the class system, old or new. And they destroy aloofness and detachment and life.

"Ah, Davidson," says Heyst at the end, "woe to the man whose heart has not learned while young to hope, to love—and to put his trust in life."

Surely this great novel, brought to climax in thunder and flickering blue light, surmounts its skill and technique, its amazingly sustained characters, to speak to our generation of belief and hope and love, of the evil and the stain of life, so that we will not shrink from what appears ugly and degrading, from what our very pulse beats tell us is noble and prosaic, redeeming and required.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

The Stage

Golden Boy

CLIFFORD ODETS wrote "Golden Boy" at the height of his powers as an angry, moralizing neo-realist, and it remains his most successful play. Where the earlier "Awake and Sing," for all its skill in infusing a surface realism with the natural poetry of Jewish-American speech, still moved loosely about the stage in the accepted Chekhovian manner, "Golden Boy" pulled the dramatic reins tight and shocked its way through the evening like a series of body-blows. Without losing rhythm or imagery, the speech of the play adapted itself to the lean and hard-driving urgency of a thoroughly theatrical structure; the language remained richer than what we had been getting under the guise of keyhole naturalism, and the play moved like lightning besides.

In his subsequent work Odets has kept his eye on theatrical effect but he has lost, or become embarrassed by, the search for an idiomatic poetry. Perhaps the mockery

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that greeted some of his motion picture writing—"We could make beautiful music together"—convinced him that the clash between a scientifically observed surface and an imaginatively phrased line was too great. Perhaps he has continued to need, but been unable to get, the carefully developed and highly sympathetic playing style which the Group Theatre perfected for him. The Group was always—or nearly always—able to take a passage like the following:

> With music I'm never alone when I'm alone—playing music. . . . That's like saying "I am a man. I belong here. How do you do, World—good evening!" When I play music nothing is closed to me. I'm not afraid of people and what they say. There's no war in music. It's not like the streets. Does this sound funny?

and make it sound vigorous, plausible, down-to-earth. Such a later play as "The Country Girl" remains shrewdly practical melodrama, but it has lost the peculiar melody which was Odets' most distinctive contribution to our stage.

In reviving "Golden Boy," the American National Theatre and Academy has caught hold of the play's powerhouse drive with considerable skill. The author has directed for pace, and he has assembled a number of fine actors who bark, bite, and snarl the play's uglier passages with great intensity. I think the contrasting passages, notably the freer and more lyric love scenes, are less successfully managed. The players, and particularly Bette Grayson as the girl in the case, have not quite found an underlying pattern which will embrace the tangy metaphors and make them sound spontaneous. Lines are allowed to become isolated, to be read as rhetorical statements, and when the line is something like "I've been undersea a long time" or "Misery reached out to misery" it comes to have a pretentious and self-conscious air about it.

Even so, there are moments in the present production when the balance between these things is perfectly realized. William Hansen, as the devoted trainer of the greedy young fighter who is steadily destroying himself, has a quiet scene in which he tries to divert his charge from his downward path—"You're loaded with love, Joe; find something to give it to"—that is strikingly honest. And the entire last scene of the play, in which a bunch of hard-headed promoters "cut up" their boy while the boy is actually driving himself to his final crackup, is a first-rate blending of casual atmosphere and ironic comment.

John Garfield brings savage intensity to his boy's battle for riches, though he somewhat neglects the sensitivity—here rather patly symbolized by a love of music—which sets up his interior struggle. Lee J. Cobb displays his usual controlled power in the lesser role of the boy's bewildered father, and Jack Glugman, Bert Conway, and Tony Kraber are especially effective in important bits. (*At the* ANTA *Playhouse*)

WALTER KERR.

The Screen

Thorns in the June Roses

IT IS A GOOD thing, perhaps, that *"The Marrying Kind"* did not come out in June. This well-made movie, which tries so hard to take an honest look at marriage, might scare away some prospective brides and grooms, especially those romantically-minded individuals who think that married life even in a city like New York is continuous bliss in a rose-covered cottage.

At the picture's start, the couple, whose marriage we examine so closely through the years, are in New York's Domestic Relations Court insisting they want a separation: their marriage is not sick, it's dead. The woman judge (played by Madge Kennedy—do you remember when she was one of those cutie-pie stars of more than thirty years ago?) thinks things should be talked over first. And she also thinks there are three sides to every story: his, hers and the truth.

Then begins a series of flashbacks that are brilliantly directed by George Cukor. Judy Holliday as the wife, much softer and sweeter than the dumb blonde in "Born Yesterday" and with only a touch of her cracked voice in the high comedy and hysterical scenes, tells her version of the years of marriage, while Aldo Ray as the husband, an attractive, athletic-looking newcomer whose voice was evidently cracked at the same school as Judy's, tells his version of their life together. And while they talk, the camera shows us what really happened—the truthful side of the story which doesn't always tally with their interpretations. Fortunately Director Cukor doesn't overwork this clever device; but aided by the intelligent script written by Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin and the good acting of the two leads and their supporting cast, the flashbacks reveal bit by bit the whole story of this marriage.

It was all lovey-dovey at first—when the minor irritations seemed so minor; but as time went on the spats got bigger and the blow-ups came more often. Of course even then there were good times with the bad; and you realize, just as Judy and Aldo realize as they recount gay scenes and stormy scenes from the past, that the bad times don't seem as bad now as they did then—except for the tragic death of their little boy. They felt they could never recover from that; and afterward the bickering over in-laws and money and a hundred and one little things seemed much worse.

You keep wishing as you watch this couple, whom the movie examines without rose-colored glasses, that they had more resources to fall back on—some spiritual insight and faith, more understanding of the world, of other people and of themselves in particular. One fact becomes obvious as we get to know them better: the wife in spite of all her empty-headed chatter is much more emotionally mature than the husband, whose petty jealousies and ambition beyond his capacity cause him to bounce out of the apartment whenever he gets angry. Although the wife

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knows how and when to comfort her husband, she finally decides that this is her house and her marriage too and she will do a little rushing out too when things go wrong.

A word should be said about the good photography in "The Marrying Kind." New York City provides the main background and in giving us a feel of the place, the camera takes in everything. This is a nervous city, and you'll agree with Judy that this is a nervous world. But you'll feel like cheering at the end of this movie, that has been both funny and heart-breaking, when the couple decide their marriage is worth saving. Aldo knows he loves Judy and their daughter: "I can't promise I'll be no different, but I'll try." Judy knows now she still loves Aldo and wants him to try.

THE wife in *"Something To Live For"* is also a patient and brave little woman, and while Teresa Wright plays her well, you wish that the role gave her a chance to display a little spunk along with her endless understanding. Teresa really has quite a problem in this set-up: her husband (Ray Milland) is a former alcoholic who now goes out on A.A. stints to help drinkers who just can't leave the bottle alone. I'm not sure that the script's premise that *only* a drunk can help a drunk is entirely accurate, but on this particular call, Ray finds himself in a most precarious position. The drunk is a woman (Joan Fontaine), an actress who is able to leave the stuff alone while on the road; but she goes to pieces in New York because she knows out-front will be her former lover, a director who expects her to fail.

For some reason Producer-Director George Stevens, who did so well with "A Place in the Sun," handles this preposterous script as if it were great drama, and the result is a lot of pretentious nonsense that only skims over the surface of the drinking problem. Joan neither looks nor acts like an alcoholic; and Milland, forgetting what he learned in his fine portrayal in "The Lost Weekend," only walks through his role. They suffer through a party scene when people cruelly try to ply them with liquor, and after falling in love, they emote through their big renunciation sequence so the whole thing can end with Joan a smash hit on the stage while Teresa and Ray watch cozily from the audience. I suppose both Ray and Joan will be on tap now for future calls from dipsomaniacs; but actually the good work done by A.A. merits more serious treatment in the movies.

FOR audiences who like their films cerebral as well as pleasing to the eye and ear, there is the handsome English movie made from T. S. Eliot's *"Murder in the Cathedral."* Although Producer-Director George Hoellering's picture is cinematically static at times and too solidly crowded with ideas and symbols for complete enjoyment in one viewing, it is something not to be missed by anyone for whom movies are more than frivolous entertainment.

Those who saw or read Eliot's poetic drama will remember that it is about Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, who falls out of court favor when he refuses to let King Henry II dominate the Church. After returning from voluntary exile, Thomas successfully resists the four temptations (yielding to the King, becoming chancellor, assassinating the King, sacrificing himself to martyrdom and certain sainthood) and is at last murdered by the King's knights who then try to defend their crime by saying they acted for the good of the country.

An Anglican clergyman (Father John Groser, who is a non-professional actor) portrays Thomas with great dignity and simplicity, and he is surrounded by a cast of professionals who are not well-known in this country but who read and chant the lines beautifully. Eliot himself adapted and expanded his play for the screen; and the visuals with stunning shots of medieval sculpture and architecture are a perfect accompaniment for the stirring poetry and music and singing.

Those who saw Eliot's play when it was first done here by the WPA Federal Theater Project or those who saw later revivals will be impressed, as they consider world developments since the 1930's, with lines like "This is no new discord," or "We must comply but not consent," or "A Christian martyrdom is never an accident," or "Stone and oak decay; the Church protects her own in her own way." Again and again as you see and hear Thomas à Becket take a stand against the twelfth-century despot, you will think of today's Beckets like Stepinac and Mindszenty.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Communications

"Brain-Washing in Red China"

Hong Kong.

TO THE EDITORS: On my return to Hong Kong after two months of news-gathering in Java and Bali, I found a welcome pile of reviews of *Brain-washing in Red China* waiting for me. They were all highly favorable, but for the first time in any review, someone questioned one of my facts. This was in THE COMMONWEAL'S review by Harold C. Hinton.

Frankly, the facts I relate are so extraordinary that I am not surprised that anyone should wonder whether such things can be. Unfortunately, they can be and are. I wish they weren't.

Nowhere in the book is any situation exaggerated—events have proven that if I erred in sizing up the situation, it was on the side of caution. The book contains no fact that cannot be fully proven. After all, the bulk of the book is based on Communist diaries, Communist textbooks, Communist literature, Communist sources throughout.

Mr. Hinton's reference to journalists' being often accused of exaggerating may be leveled at any class of individual. I have never come across such exaggerations, and distortions for the sake of proving a point as I have met in academic circles, for instance. Snide remarks get us nowhere, even if meant well.

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Mr. Hinton quotes me as saying, "With a few exceptions, all the Chinese-language bookshops, including most of the big ones, were either entirely or overwhelmingly pro-Communist," and that some of these Hong Kong bookshops even were registered in Red China. Then he quotes E. Stuart Kirby of Hong Kong University on a different subject, on whether Communism is on the increase or decrease in Hong Kong. The only point in Kirby's quotation that is appropriate to mine is that bookshops were, indeed, full of Red literature, but that these were "of the most boring type, read by comparatively few people."

This is untrue. My point was that these bookshops carry only Communist literature, and are crowded with Chinese young men and adults in all hours of the day, who stand by reading, swallowing what they are being fed. If Mr. Hinton doubts this, let him check up with the American newspaper corps here, or the U.S.I.S., or any neutral observer.

Mr. Hinton, in quoting a British economist of whom few Americans have heard, in a manner as if he were refuting me, should have let readers of THE COMMONWEAL know Mr. Kirby's viewpoint. I suppose Mr. Kirby would himself say that he was exaggerating when he wrote that the U.S. imposed limitations on exports to Red China to hide its failure on the "more manly plane of arms." Here is the exact quotation, from Kirby's article in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of last Nov. 15:

"The embargo occasioned—in an odd way, very characteristic of Chinese conditions—a marked rise in local good will towards Britain. The Americans were behaving more barbarously toward an ally—even a kinsman—publicly distrusting his will or ability to act as such, trying to make him lose face, and breaking his rice bowl at the same time. Sympathy went to the victim, whose conduct was not only more civilized but more intelligible. To resort to the ignoble devices of economic warfare was, in any case, to the Chinese mind, tantamount to confession of failure on the higher, more manly plane of arms." Kirby goes on to say, "It is nevertheless unlikely that the Chinese Communists will attack Hong Kong, unless American policy forces them to do so."

And much more of the same. I call this a demonstrable pack of lies. Indeed, the Chinese-owned Hong Kong *Standard,* a daily English-language newspaper in Hong Kong, became so indignant over the effort to make believe the Chinese here felt this way that it ran an editorial saying that so far as the Chinese were concerned, they did not want to engage in trade that might help the enemy. No Communist publicist could have done better than Kirby's effort to put it on the record that if Hong Kong is attacked by the Reds, it is America's fault. That is not only exaggerated, it is a lie.

Brain-washing in Red China gave the facts as they are, and I feel that anyone who doesn't like those facts should not try to take it out on the book, but on the situation. Then we'll be in agreement. We've been doing the wishful-thinking, face-hiding act too long. Too many of

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our sons have paid for this already in Korea, and too many Englishmen have paid for it with their lives in Malaya.

EDWARD HUNTER.

Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITORS: My review of Mr. Hunter's book was favorable on the whole, but apparently that does not satisfy him.

With regard to the situation in Hong Kong, the best description I have seen yet is an article by Henry R. Lieberman in the New York *Times,* March 9, 1952. He points out that the situation is serious, but attributes its seriousness not merely to Communist activity but also to overcrowding and the dwindling trade with the Chinese mainland. This is in marked contrast to Mr. Hunter's lurid and oversimplified description, as well as to what I now consider Mr. Kirby's over-optimism.

I do not see that Mr. Kirby's views on the question of economic sanctions against Communist China have much to do with the original question. Apart from that, however, the main point of the passage which Mr. Hunter quotes from Mr. Kirby's writings seems to me to be that the sanctions are unpopular with the merchant community in Hong Kong and that the Chinese Communists are making a propaganda point out of them. The first of these two points was confirmed for me only last night by a State Department official recently returned from Hong King, and if Mr. Hunter doubts the second I offer for his consideration the following passage from a report by the Ministry of Heavy Industry, published in the Peiping *People's Daily* of July 28, 1951: "At present, the capitalist nations ban the sale of even common machinery and supplies." Hence, the report goes on, we must get what we need from Russia. I believe that economic sanctions against Communist China are necessitated by the Korean war, but I do not see any sense in pretending that we are not hurting some people on our side by applying them.

Mr. Kirby's article was part of a cooperative survey of Communist China of a decidedly non-Communist, even anti-Communist, nature. I suggest Mr. Hunter read it, because it displays a balance which his own book lacks. His book I take to be a faithful reflection of his own sources of information—interviews, personal observations, Communist propaganda—but it tends to overemphasize the negative, repressive aspects of Communist China and thus to convey the false impression that it is founded on nothing more solid than fanaticism and terror. As a matter of fact, Mr. Hunter does not cover by any means all the negative, repressive aspects; he neglects, for example, the colossal government-sponsored program of growing opium in China for consumption both at home and abroad.

I certainly do not agree with Mr. Kirby's statement that if Hong Hong is attacked it will be the fault of the United States. I hold that it is possible to agree with one part of what a man says and yet disagree with another, and I have applied this principle not only to Messrs. Hunter and Kirby but to many others claiming to enlighten the public. But perhaps this is too fine a distinction for Mr. Hunter.

HAROLD C. HINTON.

The Confident Years of Van Wyck Brooks

By HENRY RAGO

THE pattern of Van Wyck Brooks' exploration of American literary history is now complete. *The Confident Years* (Dutton, $6.) takes us from 1885 to 1915, with a "forward glance" into more recent work, and here Mr. Brooks proposes to stop. His intention is also made clear: the entire work, consisting of *The World of Washington Irving, The Flowering of New England, The Times of Melville and Whitman, New England's Indian Summer,* and the present volume, is now given the name, *Makers and Finders: A History of the Writer in America,* 1800-1915. The epigraph is from Walt Whitman: "Poems and materials of poems shall come from their lives, they shall be makers and finders."

It can be said now that this is not literary history in the full sense of the term, but a kind of literary sociology. Hence you do not ask of this book—or, retroactively, the earlier books in this series—all that you would otherwise ask. Literary history would have to deal with finished works *as* finished, and account for more than their sociology. But Mr. Brooks can deal with the unfinished as well as the finished, the botched as well as the perfect; and perhaps more so, if there is any continuity between the broadest popular taste and its instance of refinement. Centers of reference will be different; "importance" will become a new question; "the writer" will be where Mr. Brooks finds him.

But who *is* "the writer in America"? For Mr. Brooks, he gets his "life" from the "Jeffersonian democratic tradition." And what of those writers who could not find it in themselves to accept the "optimism" which Mr. Brooks admires so much? Are they simply interruptions in the story? One would think so, from his treatment of them. This is all the harder for me to take, because I rather suspect that these very men—in their isolation and loneliness, their rejection of slogans, their struggle even for an authentic language—*are* "the writer in America." Even Whitman, at a close look, can be seen in this company. But I won't press this thesis. I mean only to caution the reader that Mr. Brooks' rather easy notions on what is "life" and what is "death," what is "positive" and what is "negative," are going to have their consequences.

Discount Mr. Brooks' critical judgments as critical judgments, say that they are irrelevant to the purposes announced in his grand title for the series. Be patient with his repetition of some of the dullest and most misleading critical clichés of our time. Take it as unimportant that Mr. Brooks implies that Pound had so "little to say" (alas, I wish he hadn't had so much to say). Allow Mr.

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Brooks to help perpetuate the legend that the idea of original sin is the invention of Mr. Eliot. Dismiss with only brief regret the surprising number of masterpieces which, although secure by several or even many centuries from the influence of Mr. Eliot, fall short of the exacting standards of the Jeffersonian tradition. But when life is put on one side and death on the other, so that the fortune of the American writer flourishes in this tradition and languishes in that, I think we can begin to quarrel with Mr. Brooks' very sociology.

I'm not sure that the figure of O. Henry (who gets a chapter all to himself) means very much or even a little to "the American writer." I *am* sure that Gertrude Stein, who, for Mr. Brooks, had "little to say," taught many writers and, through them, many others a tremendous lot about the value of their own honest experience and the resources of their native idiom. I begin to wonder, as I plough again through Mr. Brooks' numerous second-rate and third-rate people, what they ever did toward defining the terms and conditions of American writing, what ground they cleared for the American writer, what material they gave him to quarry, and what audience they gathered for him. I suspect that many of them only gave him an example to react against, a language which had been far better in the coarseness of popular speech than in the vulgarity of literary pretense, and a corrupted audience to be won back to the genuine.

IT seems thus that whatever Mr. Brooks is trying to do, some of the central issues of literary criticism are inescapable. Before we can talk about the writer in America, we had better decide what a writer is and what he is expected to do. Our inquiry is likely to take us into much broader and much deeper waters than the Jeffersonian tradition; I do not know how we can avoid studying the example of Racine, of Dante, of Plato, of Aeschylus. I do not know how we can avoid the witness of literature at its greatest strength and fullest vision.

Mr. Brooks himself takes as an argument for his views Scott Fitzgerald's belief, in *The Crack-Up,* in the "eternal necessary human values." Where are these found? I can assure Mr. Brooks that he will not find them in facile optimism, sentimentality, and mediocrity. And wherever he does find them, he will probably have to read a certain amount of unpleasantness about guilt and death and the like. I would agree that the greatest of these values in literature—and everywhere else—is in saying Yes to life. But only after living through these things which would make No a possible answer. What else is *suspense* in literature all about?

For the choice is not really between life and death or between optimism and pessimism. The choice is not between this tradition or that one. A "tradition," in the only meaningful sense of the term, is simply *given;* it is what a writer find himself in. He chooses one thing, if he chooses it: to be genuine. That choice is expressed not in any abstract political or philosophical proposition but in the silence of his work. He knows or soon learns what genuineness costs, and everything in his life and in his world is there to remind him every day *that he need not make that choice.*

Having chosen, he will refuse no knowledge and will struggle his own way to his own peace. It is thus that Shakespeare, in his fulfillment, could embrace Ariel and Caliban. *The Waste Land,* which Mr. Brooks reads too quickly, can end with a prayer for "the peace which passeth understanding." Notice that this peace is not granted *instead of* understanding, but *beyond* it.

THESE reflections help me to understand why I cannot praise this volume of Mr. Brooks or any of his previous volumes even for the qualities which most other reviewers find in him. It is always said that Mr. Brooks is "readable." This means that his style is pleasant and his anecdotes are delightful. Now Mr. Brooks' prose does have very agreeable manners, it has the air of well-tempered conversation. And his little stories are often charming. Sometimes they give us the effect of a sharp little snapshot—Frank Morris meeting Stephen Crane as a fellow-correspondent in the Spanish-American war: "Crossing on a tug boat to Key West, he watched Crane in the other bunk, writing his stuff on a bag thrown over his lap, with his hair in his eyes and his white duck trousers fouled with pitch and grease, while the little boat plunged and reared beneath them." Sometime they call up an entire world—the brownstone New York of the Eighties, the enchanted Martinique of Lafcadio Hearn. We could wish for so civilized a "desire to please" in the writers of the humorless, perspiring little essays in some of the American literary journals.

But the chit-chat is too often without edge, where edge is needed: good form does not demand such a sacrifice. And the anecdotes come too close to being the whole book; so much so that for me they cease to be "readable," they are too dense on the page, they are so many acres of underbrush. If they exist for a point, the point is lost. I could adapt the famous remark of Gertrude Stein that "anecdotes are not literature": neither are they history. The effect—despite the almost universal praise of Mr. Brooks' "writing"—is of a book not *really* written. There is instead a rather aimless browsing through interesting notes for a possible book, with the feeling that, what a great pity, so many of these will have to be discarded for the sake of proportion.

This fault is not to be discussed as a matter of style or technique. It is a matter of conception, precisely the question we began with. Quite apart from my disagreement with his conception in itself, I find here that his governing idea is not incisive enough to penetrate his material. That this should happen is no surprise. We have already seen what Mr. Brooks asks of American literature: we get the kind of answer that our question deserves, and with no more shape, no more meaning than this book has. Even the title, *The Confident Years,* will go untouched by irony; literature lying speechless, while history, which has neither voice nor eyes, has known now for a long time what that confidence really was, and still trembles from the lesson.

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Books

Look Down in Mercy. Walter Baxter. Putnam. $3.50.

CURRENTLY, in the Catholic press, there is a little flurry of disapproval because Graham Greene was given the Catholic Literary Award for 1952. The argument goes that since Mr. Greene deals realistically, even if not pruriently, with matters of sex, his work for all its literary excellence should be anathema.

It is neither within my competence nor according to my inclinations to hand down any pronunciamentos on this ticklish question. I mention it here only to warn those who take the view that there are some subjects which are definitely unfit for the novelist that this novel is not the book for them. *Look Down in Mercy* deals, in part, with homosexuality.

It is the story of a young British army captain and of the harrowing loneliness of men at war. At home, with no war to interrupt his pleasant suburban life, Tony Kent probably would have remained for life a loyal, faithful husband of middling virtue. Under the stresses and strains of the first British retreat from Rangoon, he discovers within himself strange unnatural desires that otherwise might have lain unstirred. Before this, at an isolated station in India, he had fallen into adultery, with the image of his distant wife growing ever more dim. It was during a horrible experience with fear and the feeling of abandonment, in the combat area, that he fell into the worse thing. The ordinary companionship of soldiers was not enough to satisfy his immediate pressing need for love. As grace builds on nature, so, in a sense, does vice.

Psychologically, Mr. Baxter's first novel seems to ring true: the gradual collapse of integrity under the pressure of strain which even strong men find hard to bear, along with the sly, murderous assaults of self-indulgence, leads almost inevitably to destruction. It is one thing to speak in general of the horrifying moral hazards of war. In this book Walter Baxter has spelled them out.

Baxter writes well — more than that (with the impact of the book still fresh, the simple statement seems wildly inadequate) he writes with artistry and authority. He knows what he is building and he lays his bricks one on another with patient skill and finesse. In his case it seems unnecessary to say the usual things about a promising first novel. It is hard to imagine how this book would have gained in craftsmanship even if its author had a library of work behind him. His scenes of ground warfare are as raw as a fresh wound and almost unbearable at times. All the physical horrors of war are again, with surprisingly few strokes, made immediate and inescapable.

His title (taken from the prayers after Low Mass) is an indication of the burden Baxter assumed. For

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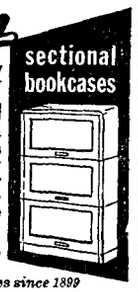

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those who deal with virtues and vice abstracted from all human context, his plea for mercy may even suggest moral callousness. But he has dealt bravely with the terrible implications of that Christian dictum which can so readily be reduced to mere formula: hate the sin and love the sinner. There is paradox in that, and with his artistic gifts Mr. Baxter has illumined the paradox as no preacher, teacher or apologist possibly could.

JOHN COGLEY.

The White Lady. Leonard Dubkin. Putnam. $3.

THE world of nature is contemplated, by and large, by two kinds of persons. On the one hand, it is studied by scientists. These are precise-minded observers, but seldom gifted with the insights of poetic imagination. On the other hand, nature is contemplated by artists. These, when good, have the insight of poetic imagination all right; but they are without the scientific understanding which would curb their flights of fancy and give sober validity to their inspired guessworks. The blend, in one nature-watcher, of sound scientific nature-knowledge and the subtle intuitions of poetic sensitivity is very rare. It is a pleasure to welcome and salute this rarity in Mr. Leonard Dubkin.

When he was a boy, Mr. Dubkin dreamed of becoming a scientific naturalist. Instead, he turned into a publisher. But a few years ago, in a leafy sort of grotto around the base of a locust tree in a vacant lot in Chicago, he chanced to come upon a colony of bats. The old spell fell upon him; and he forthwith became an ensorcelized bat-watcher.

The White Lady (which takes its title from the very rare albino *myotis lucifugus* that was born in the bat-colony, and that indeed Mr. Dubkin had the extraordinary good fortune of *seeing* born) is the story of his bat-adventures, his hours of observation in the grotto, his progress into becoming "one with" the furry little flying mammals that are so alien to us and that yet can be so close when a man

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has the insight of a scientific poet into all Creation's creaturely brotherhood.

This is a delectable little book. It is written quietly, with restraint, and is thereby the more moving. Mr. Dubkin never humanizes his animals; and he is at scrupulous pains not to conjecture about their behaviors or the content of their consciousness without saying he is conjecturing. He writes with immense informativeness, with modesty, and above all with the gentle-hearted sympathy of a man of love. *The White Lady* deserves, and will surely secure, devoted readers.

ALAN DEVOE.

The Bidou Inheritance. Edith de Born. Norton. $3.

EDITH de Born is a writer well versed in French, German, and English literature. It is not surprising to find that this, her first novel, has come into its own inheritance: that old Charles Bidou, miserly and heavy-handed with all human destinies which chance to come within the small but poisonous sphere of his Bazar, had been preceded by Balzac's Grandet; that Madeleine Bidou, his daughter, and Flaubert's Emma Bovary, are not entirely dissimilar in general conception. But these are merely incidental reminiscences and pleasures in a book which is sufficient unto itself, and which makes no conscious claim to originality of subject matter.

Her theme is the provincial life of the Bordeaux region, in the small town of Bonnefont. These she paints in the briefest but most telling manner as if, with this sparseness, to multiply the inner deserts of her characters: Bidou himself; church-going, man-hating Amélie Sudreau; the rather disagreeably daydreaming Lucien; Marius Cambornac, rising politician, inaccessible man; and finally, alas! Madeleine.

The feeling of completeness which this book inspires is due, of course, to Edith de Born's own sound structural sense, but especially to the intimate connection of that sense with the theme itself: with that completeness, or vicious circle, which is the often tragic, always inevitable substance of provincial life. For the Bidou inheritance is the effective stifling of all souls which would attempt a jump above the sea level of Bonnefont provincialism.

Edith de Born has written with restrained yet none the less intense excitement; and with a quiet ironic sense which is death to anyone it touches—and it touches not a few of these characters. Yet, apart from the artistry, perhaps the most moving quality is the warmth with which she accompanies her Madeleine through youth, unhappy marriage, and return to "life with father"; through a passionate love, then, and final return to that sea level. Other novelists have seen more, and more deeply, than Edith de Born; but too few have so clearly understood and sympathetically projected the object of their vision.

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The Sociology of the Parish. An Introductory Symposium. Edited by C. J. Nuesse and Th. J. Harte, C.Ss.R. Bruce. $4.50.

ALTHOUGH sociological research dealing with the parish has achieved some stature in Europe, it has gained ground in the United States only recently. If *The Sociology of the Parish* had preceded a recent study of a Southern parish, perhaps some of the critics of the application of sociology to the study of the parish would have been aware of the contribution that sociology can make in this field. They might have tempered their criticism and spared scientific inquiry an unfortunate setback.

In this interesting collection of articles dealing with various aspects of the parish, the historical development, the types of urban and rural, racial and national parishes, and parochial social structure are among the topics discussed. The result is a useful volume for the sociologist, the parish priest and anyone interested in the solid substructure of the Catholic Church in the United States. The practical value of the book lies not only in the description of parish census techniques and realistic appraisal of parochial societies, but in things like its fostering of insights into the structure and functioning of the parish and its demonstration of the application of scientific methods to the study of everyday parish problems. The book should help to create a favorable climate for further research in parish sociology.

CHARLES O'REILLY.

REVIEWERS

Alan Devoe has written widely on Nature and Nature studies. His latest is *This Fascinating Animal World*.

Bradford Cook teaches at Oberlin College.

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Operation Revival

TO OUR READERS: Last October 5th The Commonweal found it necessary to make a somewhat drastic appeal for new subscribers. In an editorial ominously, and quite accurately, called "Operation Survival," we announced that, although circulation was actually at a peak, increased operating costs made the future uncertain. Reaction to the appeal was swift and generous. Due mainly to the enthusiasm of readers and friendly publicists, our announced goal of 4500 new subscriptions was reached and even surpassed.

Since that day in January when we were able to state that the survival campaign was an unl qualified success, the momentum has not fallen off. This week, for instance, The Commonweal is sending out 50% more copies than it was publishing a year ago. The magazine's readers have increased in number, and that has meant a corresponding growth in editorial influence as well as a decided increase in the number of volunteer salesmen among our subscribers.

The Commonweal, let it be clearly understood, is still burdened with most of the problems to which magazines of this kind are heir. Our present successes are not so sweeping as to eliminate all the difficulties one learns to live with. But they are significant enough to be a scource of great encouragement and a lifting of editorial spirits. We realize full well that for these successes we are indebted primarily to our own "living endowment"—the loyal readers and friends who cheerfully take upon themselves work of promotion and circulation on a scale which would otherwise be beyond our resources.

It is our readers who have sent trial subscriptions to their own friends and key people in their communities who might otherwise never have known that there was such a magazine as The Commonweal. They are the ones who have encouraged potential readers to subscribe by passing on their copies to everyone who might possibly be interested. Many of these readers in turn have become volunteer salesmen on their own.

It is to thank all who have done so much, so quietly and without fanfare, and to encourage others to join in what has turned out to be a grass-roots campaign that this has been writen. We are very grateful and very heartened.

— The Editors.

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